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Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
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Item 3 of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the recommendations of the Permanent Forum

Update on the implementation of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum

Note by the secretariat

Summary

A review of the working methods of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues was initiated in 2014 with a view to assessing the status of implementation of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum in advancing the rights of indigenous peoples. At its fourteenth session, in 2015, the Forum decided to continue its consideration of the matter at future sessions. The present report contains an overview of the ongoing process of updating its working methods relating to the issuance of and follow-up to its recommendations, and an update on the implementation of the recommendations adopted at the fifteenth session of the Forum.

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I. Introduction

1. At its fourteenth session, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues initiated a process to improve its working methods relating to the implementation of its recommendations. Its key objectives were to promote the more effective implementation of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum and to strengthen its accountability in that regard, with a view to achieving a greater impact on the ground in enhancing the rights of indigenous peoples. The present report is submitted in follow up to the decision of the Forum to continue its discussions on the matter, in a transparent and accountable manner, at future sessions (see E/2015/43-E/C.19/2015/10, para. 42). A similar report was prepared in 2015 (E/C.19/2015/3) and a conference room paper providing an update on the implementation of the recommendations of the Forum was prepared in 2016.[1]

2. This process included reducing the number of recommendations, making them more targeted and more implementable and establishing an improved system of follow-up and support with regard to the implementation of the recommendations after their adoption. The new approach also focused on assessing and publicly sharing the major achievements made in the implementation of the recommendations with the aim of promoting best practices.

3. The present report provides an introduction to the new working methods relating to follow-up to recommendations and sets out the achievements obtained in implementing the recommendations made at the fifteenth session of the Permanent Forum.

4. The information used in the assessment of the implementation of recommendations are retrieved primarily from the reports submitted by Member States, indigenous peoples' organizations, national human rights institutions, funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental bodies. In addition, information available in United Nations reports and documents has been used. The Permanent Forum acknowledges and expresses its gratitude to those that provided reports and urges them to continue providing information on their activities and on follow-up to the recommendations of the Forum.

5. As at 10 January, reports had been received from the Governments of Denmark, El Salvador, Honduras and Peru. In addition, 10 indigenous peoples' organizations provided reports, as well as seven national human rights institutions from Argentina, Australia, Canada, Kenya, Nicaragua, New Zealand and the Philippines. A total of 14 responses were received from United Nations entities, namely the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Department of Public Information, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),

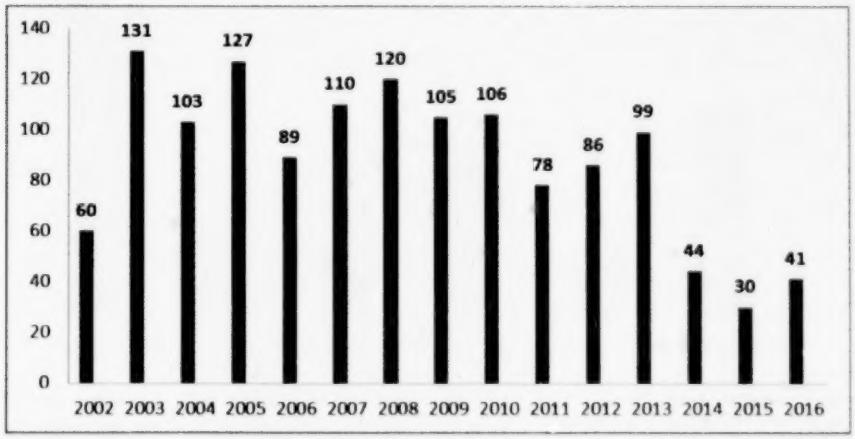
[1] See the conference room paper entitled "Update on the implementation of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum", prepared by Oliver Loode, a member of the Forum and its Rapporteur. Available from www.un.org/indigenous under the documents for the fifteenth session.

the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United Nations Global Compact, the World Bank Group and the secretariat of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). The comprehensive responses are available on the page dedicated to indigenous peoples on the website of the Division for Social Policy and Development: www.un.org/indigenous.

II. Background

6. Since its first session, in 2002, the Forum has issued a total of 1,328 recommendations to Member States, indigenous peoples' organizations, the United Nations system and other stakeholders[2] in its six mandated areas: economic and social development; culture; environment; education; health; and human rights (see fig. I). At the initial sessions of the Permanent Forum, more than 100 recommendations were issued per session. Since 2014, the number of recommendations has been reduced to around 40 per session.

Figure I
Number of recommendations made by the Permanent Forum, 2002-2016



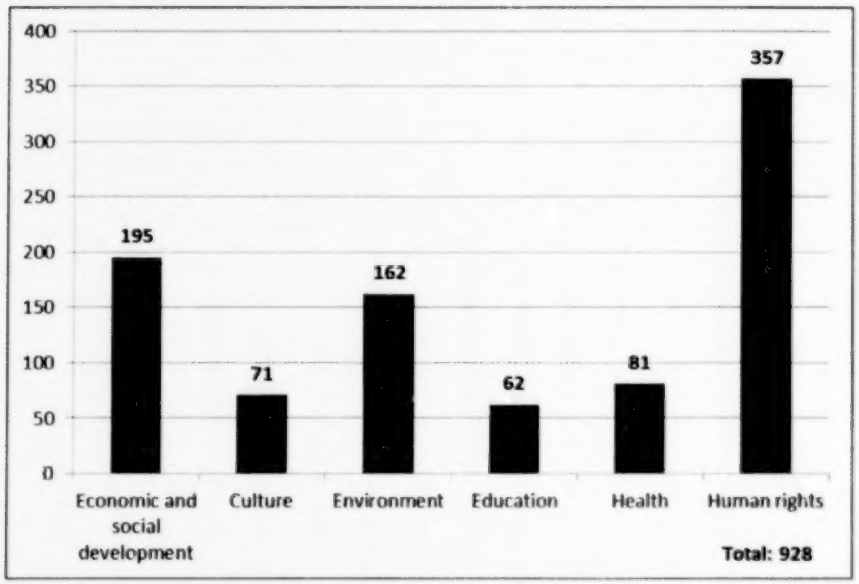
7. Recommendations from 2003-2016 are contained in the database of recommendations, available from www.un.org/indigenous. The database features an overview of the status of the implementation of the recommendations, an evaluation as to whether the recommendations have been implemented, are ongoing, have not yet been initiated or were outdated. Each year, the Permanent Forum circulates a questionnaire to Member States, indigenous peoples' organizations, national human rights institutions and United Nations entities, requesting information on the

[2] The Forum issued 60 recommendations at its inaugural session, in 2002.

implementation of the recommendations, obstacles encountered and factors that facilitate their implementation.

8. Issues relating to indigenous peoples are diverse and complex. As a result, the Permanent Forum has issued recommendations addressing a wide range of issues that are important to ensuring the rights of indigenous peoples. Of the 928 recommendations that have been classified under one or more of the six mandated areas of the Forum, the vast majority — 357 recommendations — have been issued under the area of human rights, followed by 195 under economic and social development, 162 under environment, 81 under health, 71 under culture and 62 under education. In addition to recommendations related directly to the six mandated areas, the Forum has also issued other recommendations, in particular relating to indigenous children and young people (84 recommendations), indigenous women (79), traditional knowledge (31) and methods of work (139) (see fig. II).

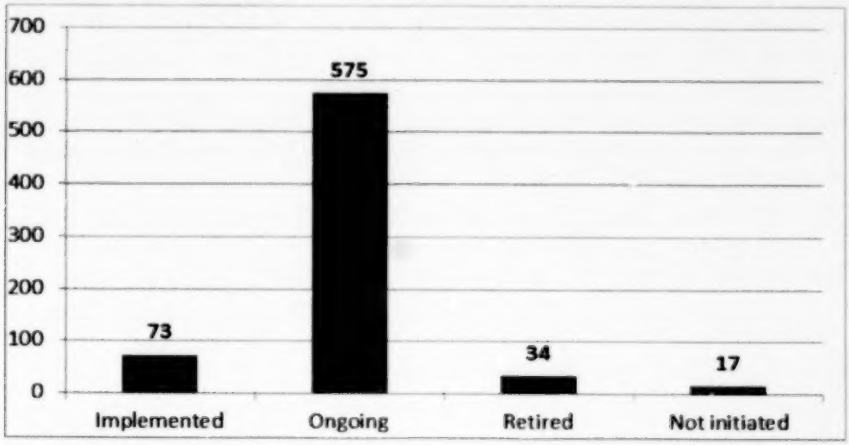
Figure II
Number of recommendations by mandated area, 2003-2016



Note: Some recommendations may have been registered under more than one area. Recommendations issued under other areas are not included in the figure.

9. In terms of the implementation of the recommendations, data are not available to conduct a thorough analysis of the results obtained to date. According to an internal review conducted by the secretariat of the Permanent Forum in 2013, however, of 699 recommendations in the database, a majority of them were still ongoing, whereas only slightly more than 10 per cent had been implemented or completed at that time (see fig. III).

Figure III
Status of implementation of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum



Source: Internal review of 699 recommendations in the recommendations database conducted by the secretariat of the Forum in 2013.

10. The update of the recommendations was initiated in order to assess the status of their implementation and the degree to which they have an impact on the lives of indigenous peoples.

11. Among the main challenges to implementation identified by the Permanent Forum was the high number of annual recommendations, their lack of specific targets and relevance to specific contexts of each country, as well as, more broadly, the lack of knowledge and dissemination of the recommendations after the session had concluded.[3]

12. To address those challenges, the Permanent Forum decided to update its follow-up process and increase the active role played by the expert members in following up on the implementation of the recommendations. The approach is based on providing a platform for showcasing achievements and good practices at the session.

13. The following sections contain an introduction to the new working methods of the follow-up process and detail the achievements obtained in the implementation of the recommendations made at the fifteenth session of the Permanent Forum.

[3] See the background analysis for the development of the system-wide action plan for ensuring a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, prepared on the basis of information provided by Member States and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes between 2011 and 2015. Available from www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/about-us/system-wide-action-plan.html.

Overview of the updated process

14. The updated review process was initiated in 2015, in follow-up to the recommendations made by the Permanent Forum at its fourteenth session, and consisted of the following measures:

(a) The number of recommendations was reduced and they were made more implementable by clearly identifying a recipient and a concrete recommended action for each recommendation, following the "SMART criteria" that they be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound;

(b) Recommendations were assigned to individual members of the Forum so that each member was responsible for following up on specific recommendations. Members were substantively supported by the secretariat of the Forum;

(c) Members of the Forum were tasked with following up on their assigned recommendations in the period between sessions, together with the main stakeholders targeted in the recommendation;

(d) On the basis of reports from members of the Forum, Member States, funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental bodies, as well as additional inputs, the secretariat compiled an aggregated report on the implementation of the recommendations.[1] As part of the new working methods, the Forum initiated interactive dialogues with its three key partners, namely Member States, indigenous peoples and United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. At the session, the members of the Forum had closed and dedicated sessions with the key partners in order to follow up on recommendations and discuss other relevant matters.

III. Progress in implementation

15. At its fifteenth session, the Permanent Forum made 41 recommendations to Member States, the United Nations system and indigenous peoples. After the session, the members of the Forum identified 36 of those recommendations that they regarded as relevant and actionable for follow-up. Furthermore, the members of the Forum decided to continue to follow up on four recommendations from the fourteenth session of the Forum that were still in the process of implementation and in which the Forum could have an impact. In total, 40 recommendations were identified for follow-up and review.

16. In May 2016, there was already evidence of some progress having been made on the recommendations made by the Permanent Forum at its fifteenth session. The major achievements can be broadly categorized into five thematic areas: (a) empowerment of indigenous women on the agenda of the Commission on the Status of Women; (b) International Year of Indigenous Languages; (c) increasing participation of indigenous young people at the United Nations; (d) advancing the rights of indigenous peoples in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and (e) implementation of the system-wide action plan for ensuring a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (E/C.19/2016/5).

17. Although it is difficult to attribute progress made in a certain area to the recommendations and actions of the Permanent Forum, there are some linkages that can be attributed to the role of the Forum with the support of the secretariat. The progress is typically a result of the recommendations being adopted in combination with active follow-up by the Forum and its secretariat with involved stakeholders. The following section details the achievements made in the implementation of the recommendations made by the Forum at its fifteenth session, grouped by thematic area. Unless otherwise indicated, the recommendations and paragraph numbers below are those contained in the report of the Forum on its fifteenth session (see E/2016/43-E/C.19/2016/11, paras. 4-75).

Inclusion of "empowerment of indigenous women" on the agenda of the Commission on the Status of Women (recommendation in para. 36, as well as those in paras. 35, 37, 38 and 39)

18. In response to concerns regarding the situation of indigenous women, as reflected in the recommendations of the Permanent Forum, the special theme for the third session of the Forum, in 2004, was indigenous women. Over the years, the Forum has adopted more than 150 recommendations directly referring to the situation of indigenous women and addressing a wide range of issues, including education, culture, health, human rights, environment and development, conflict and political participation (see E/C.19/2015/2, paras. 7, 8, 12 and 13).

19. In paragraph 19 of its resolution 69/2, entitled "Outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples", the General Assembly invited the Commission on the Status of Women to consider the issue of the empowerment of indigenous women at a future session.

20. The Permanent Forum, at its fourteenth session, recommended that the Commission on the Status of Women consider the empowerment of indigenous women as a priority theme of its sixty-first session, in 2017, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Declaration (see E/2015/43-E/C.19/2015/10, para. 43).

21. As a result of the recommendation of the Permanent Forum and concerted efforts by its secretariat and indigenous women's organizations, several actions took place in 2016, in particular at the sixtieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, in follow up to the recommendations. They included providing briefings for the Chair of the Bureau of the Commission and the Group of Friends of Indigenous Peoples[4] and organizing side events at the sixtieth session of the Commission.[5]

22. In its resolution 2016/3 on the multi-year programme of work of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council recalled the invitation to the Commission to consider the issue of the empowerment of indigenous women at a future session, as stated in paragraph 19 of General

[4] The Group of Friends of Indigenous Peoples is a group of around 14 Member States that support indigenous issues. The Chair of the Group was Mexico in 2016.

[5] See www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/mandated-areas1/indigenous-women/indigenous-women-and-the-commission-on-the-status-of-women.html.

Assembly resolution 69/2, and acknowledged the intention to place the issue as a focus area of its sixty-first session. At its sixtieth session, the Commission decided to consider the empowerment of indigenous women as a focus area/emerging issue at its sixty-first session, in 2017.

23. The recommendation of the Permanent Forum aimed at ensuring that the empowerment of indigenous women would be covered substantially as a focus area (see E/2016/43-E/C.19/2016/11, para. 36). The Forum welcomed the intention of the Commission on the Status of Women to make the issue of the empowerment of indigenous women a focus area of its sixty-first session, to be held in 2017. The Forum invited the Bureau of the Commission to consider organizing a half-day session on the issue. The recommendation was met. The Commission has included "empowerment of indigenous women" in the proposed programme of work for its sixty-first session as a focus area and emerging issue (see E/CN.6/2017/1/Add.1/Rev.1). The focus area will be covered in a half-day session held during the high-level week of the Commission. Indigenous women, members of the Forum and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples have been invited to attend.

24. In evaluating the recommendations of the Permanent Forum relating to the work of the Commission on the Status of Women, the recommendations made in both 2015 and 2016 were to a great degree in line with the "SMART criteria" (see para. 14 (a), above). They were specific with regard to their target group, the Commission on the Status of Women (2015) and its Bureau (2016); their aim, placing "empowerment of indigenous women" as a priority theme (2015) and organizing a half-day session on the issue (2016); and time frame, the sixty-first session, in 2017. Furthermore, the recommendations had support from Member States, emerging from the mandate contained in the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. Close cooperation between the Chair and focal points of the Permanent Forum, indigenous women's organizations and UN-Women, with the support of the secretariat of the Forum,[6] contributed to the achievement of the recommendations. While the initial aim of becoming a priority theme of the Commission was not achieved, the result can be considered an achievement and result of the World Conference and strategic follow up by the Forum through very targeted and specific recommendations over several years. To continue to follow up on the rights of indigenous women on a regular basis, the Forum has decided to include indigenous women on the agenda of its annual session as a standing item.

Proclamation of 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages (related to the recommendations in paras. 9-12)

25. The Permanent Forum has, since its establishment, drawn attention to the critical challenge of the endangered languages of indigenous peoples, including through several recommendations and the organization of two international expert group meetings on indigenous languages, hosted by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in 2008 and 2016. The outcomes of the two expert group meetings have informed the work of the Forum over the past six years.

[6] At the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, a side event on the empowerment of indigenous women and a press conference, as well as bilateral meetings with members of the Bureau of the Commission, were held.

26. The proposal for an international year was raised at the expert group meeting held in January 2016 and taken up by the Permanent Forum at its fifteenth session. The Forum recommended that the General Assembly, by 2020, proclaim an international year of indigenous languages and draw attention to the critical loss of indigenous languages and the urgent need to preserve, revitalize and promote indigenous languages and to take further urgent steps at the national and international levels (see E/2016/43-E/C.19/2016/11, para. 11).

27. In paragraph 13 of its resolution 71/178, the General Assembly proclaimed the year beginning on 1 January 2019 the International Year of Indigenous Languages, to draw attention to the critical loss of indigenous languages and the urgent need to preserve, revitalize and promote indigenous languages and to take further urgent steps at the national and international levels, and invited UNESCO to serve as the lead agency for the Year, in collaboration with other relevant agencies, within existing resources.

Increasing the participation of indigenous young people at the United Nations (recommendation in para. 32 in particular, as well as those in paras. 33 and 34)

28. The Permanent Forum has expressed its considerable concern regarding the situation of indigenous young people, in recent years. It has made several recommendations to Member States and the United Nations system on how to better support indigenous young people and promote their participation at the sessions of the Forum and in the context of other relevant United Nations platforms.[7] In the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, the General Assembly also emphasized the importance of addressing the specific concerns of indigenous young people.

29. Of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum relating to indigenous young people, progress has been made with regard to recommendation 32. The Forum appreciates the willingness of the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth to make visible the situation of indigenous young people, in particular concerning suicide and self-harm, in his advocacy. The Forum calls upon Member States to implement the recommendations of the international expert group meeting on indigenous youth held in 2013 (see E/C.19/2013/3), in collaboration with the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development and with the full participation of indigenous young people. The Forum invites the Network to report on progress in that regard at the sixteenth session of the Forum. The Forum invites the Network and the Envoy to increase the participation of indigenous young people in the sessions of the Forum and all relevant United Nations forums, and to report on progress in that regard at the sixteenth session of the Forum.

30. The Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth addressed the fifteenth session of the Forum on matters concerning indigenous young people, in particular on the

[7] Those recommendations include: the empowerment and participation of indigenous young people at the United Nations; addressing the challenge of suicide and self-harm among indigenous young people; youth unemployment; indigenous young people in urban areas; and capacity-building needs of indigenous young people. For a detailed overview of the recommendations relating to youth, see www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/mandated-areas1/children-and-youth.html.

topic of self-harm and suicide. Moreover, the Envoy engaged with the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus on the margins of the session.

31. In 2016, an indigenous woman from Canada, Nikki Fraser, was selected as one of the 17 Young Leaders for the Sustainable Development Goals, an initiative of the Office of the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth to recognize youth leadership in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Coming from the Tk'emlups Te Secwepemc community, Ms. Fraser advocates on behalf of missing and murdered indigenous women.

32. The secretariat of the Permanent Forum has further followed up on the recommendations of the Forum by cooperating with the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development, co-chaired by the Office of the Focal Point on Youth of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which acts as the focal point within the United Nations system on youth-related matters,[8] and UN-Women and raising awareness about the report of the expert group meeting on indigenous youth held in 2013 and the recommendation relating to increasing the participation of indigenous young people in meetings at the United Nations.

33. Several United Nations entities have increased their levels of engagement and focus on issues relating to indigenous young people in this regard. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, through the Division for Social Policy and Development, provided capacity-building programmes and technical cooperation in the Latin American region in November 2016 with a stronger focus on the inclusion of indigenous young people and is further developing an issue paper on indigenous young people.

34. Members of the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus have also been invited to participate in United Nations forums and initiatives, such as the annual Youth Forum of the Economic and Social Council, held on 30 and 31 January 2017. One of the break-out groups of the Youth Forum focused on Sustainable Development Goal 2 relating to hunger and agriculture, paying specific attention to indigenous peoples' issues in that context. One indigenous young person participated in the session to ensure that the discussions would benefit from the perspectives and contributions of indigenous young people.

35. At the fifteenth session of the Permanent Forum, the Forum decided to include a recurring agenda item on "Indigenous youth" at future sessions, to foster continuity and increased participation of indigenous young people in the sessions of the Forum. Following up on the recommendation of the Forum, the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development and the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth will be invited to report on progress in implementing the recommendation.

Advancing the rights of indigenous peoples in the 2030 Agenda (recommendation in para. 28 in particular, as well as those in paras. 42, 74 and 75)

36. In line with its mandate, as set out in Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/22 to provide expert advice, raise awareness and disseminate information within the United Nations system on indigenous issues, the Permanent Forum has

[8] See General Assembly resolution 70/127, para. 23.

also been engaged in raising awareness of indigenous issues in the framework of the 2030 Agenda.

37. The Permanent Forum provided advice on indigenous issues in the consultation process that shaped the 2030 Agenda, in the development of a global indicator framework to review the Agenda and, most recently, in the first year of its implementation.

38. The recommendations made by the Permanent Forum at its fifteenth session included several relating to the 2030 Agenda, in particular the recommendation in paragraph 28 of the report on the session, which emphasised the importance of respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Furthermore, the Forum recommended that States and funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system ensure that data is disaggregated according to indigenous identifiers and the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples in developing national action plans and in follow-up to and review of the Agenda (see E/2016/43-E/C.19/2016/11, para. 28).

39. The Permanent Forum assumed an active role at the meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2016, at which it considered the theme "Ensuring that no one is left behind" and was the first meeting of the high-level political forum to be held after the adoption by the General Assembly of the 2030 Agenda, on 25 September 2015. The high-level political forum is the central United Nations platform for monitoring and review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

40. As a subsidiary body to the Economic and Social Council, the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues provided substantive inputs to the thematic reviews of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, in 2016, highlighting the need to ensure that indigenous peoples are not left behind in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The substantive inputs took forward the recommendation made by the Permanent Forum at its fifteenth session, highlighting the need for disaggregated data, the participation of indigenous peoples, as well as full respect and promotion of their rights as reflected in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in implementing the 2030 Agenda. The substantive inputs are included in the online review platform of the high-level political forum.[9]

41. The Permanent Forum also contributed to placing indigenous issues on the agenda of the high-level political forum on sustainable development through the organization of a press conference and a side event hosted by the secretariat of the Permanent Forum and IFAD in cooperation with the Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations. The Chair of the Permanent Forum, Alvaro Pop Ac, was invited to be the lead speaker at the panel on the theme "Ensuring that no one is left behind: envisioning an inclusive world in 2030" held on the opening day of the high-level political forum. The Permanent Forum focal point on the 2030 Agenda, Joan Carling, together with the indigenous peoples' major groups, participated in the thematic discussions and advocated for the inclusion of indigenous rights in the 2030 Agenda and the voluntary national reviews.

[9] Available from https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/inputs.

42. In addition to the advances made at the high-level political forum on sustainable development, several of the priorities recommended by the Permanent Forum, in particular regarding disaggregated data and the participation of indigenous peoples in implementation, follow-up and review, were included in General Assembly resolution 71/178 on the rights of indigenous peoples. In the resolution, the Assembly encouraged Member States to give due consideration to all the rights of indigenous peoples in fulfilling the commitments undertaken in the 2030 Agenda and in the elaboration of national programmes, also encouraged States to consider including in their voluntary national reviews for the high-level political forum and their national and global reports information related to indigenous peoples on the progress made and challenges in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, bearing in mind paragraphs 78 and 79 of the Agenda, and further encouraged States to compile disaggregated data to measure progress and ensure that no one was left behind.

43. The reference to paragraph 79 of the 2030 Agenda is particularly important, given that, in that paragraph, the General Assembly encouraged Member States to draw on contributions from indigenous peoples in conducting their national reviews. Seven of the 22 reports of Member States for the voluntary national reviews of the 2030 Agenda made explicit mention of indigenous peoples either as a global priority or a national concern.[10]

44. The active participation of members of the Permanent Forum in the high-level political forum on sustainable development, together with representatives of indigenous peoples' major groups and other indigenous representatives, and the mandate of the Forum to provide substantive inputs to the thematic reviews of the high-level political forum provided a platform for the Forum to bring forward its recommendations in the context of the discussions taking place at the high-level political forum.

Implementation of the system-wide action plan

45. In its resolution 69/2, entitled "Outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples", the General Assembly requested the development of a system-wide action plan to ensure a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Under the leadership of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, with support from the secretariat of the Permanent Forum, the system-wide action plan was prepared by the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues. The system-wide action plan was prepared on the basis of consultations with indigenous peoples, Member States and United Nations system entities. The Secretary-General launched the plan at the opening of the fifteenth session of the Forum, in May 2016.

46. In follow-up to the above, at its fifteenth session, the Permanent Forum recommended that the members of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues demonstrate strong commitment at the highest level, including by allocating sufficient resources to implement the system-wide action plan for ensuring a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the United Nations

[10] See https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/inputs.

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (see E/2016/43-E/C.19/2016/11, para. 72 (b)). Furthermore, the Forum requested the members of the Inter-Agency Support Group to include in their annual reports to the Forum information on progress made in the implementation of the system-wide action plan (ibid., para. 73).

47. The system-wide action plan was launched in May 2016. Although specific information on funds allocated to implement the system-wide action plan is not available, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and other intergovernmental bodies have documented a wide range of activities that they are implementing within the framework of the six action areas of the plan.[11]

48. A questionnaire was sent to entities in the United Nations system and other intergovernmental entities, and the responses received provided information on actions taken and progress made in the implementation of the system-wide action plan. Responses were received from the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Department of Public Information, ECLAC, IFAD, ILO, the Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, OHCHR, UNESCO, the United Nations Global Compact, UN-Women, the World Bank Group and WIPO.

49. Apart from the progress made by individual entities, some cross-cutting and joint activities have also been initiated in response to the system-wide action plan.

50. Implementation of the system-wide action plan was the main item on the agenda of the annual meeting of the Inter-Agency Support Group, which was held from 3-5 October 2016 and hosted by the co-chairs of the Support Group, IFAD, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Land Coalition, together with the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the secretariat of the Permanent Forum, as a permanent co-chair of the Support Group. At the meeting, representatives of 20 United Nations agencies, the indigenous-specific mechanisms, the Forum and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples were in attendance.

51. With the objective of advancing the implementation of the system-wide action plan, the meeting reviewed each of the six action elements and prioritized coherent actions to be taken by the Inter-Agency Support Group under each of the elements for the period 2018-2020.

52. In 2016, the Department of Public Information, as the lead entity for implementation of the first element of the system-wide action plan,[12] established and chaired a working group of communications professionals from United Nations system partners working on indigenous issues, including the Department of

[11] For additional information on the implementation of the system-wide action plan, see E/C.19/2017/2.

[12] The first element of the system-wide action plan is to raise awareness of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including by: (a) conducting a high-level awareness raising initiative; (b) developing a succinct set of key messages based on the Declaration; and (c) developing and launching a media and outreach campaign. More information on the system-wide action plan is available from www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/about-us/system-wide-action-plan.html.

Economic and Social Affairs, DPI, FAO, IFAD, OHCHR, the Pan American Health Organization, the World Health Organization, UNDP, UNESCO, the United Nations Global Compact and UN-Women. The working group aims at developing and implementing a communications and outreach strategy on the rights of indigenous peoples, as called for in the plan. As at the beginning of 2017, a draft communications strategy, a set of key messages on the Declaration and an online platform for sharing materials have been developed.

IV. Lessons learned and way forward

53. In 2016, progress was made in raising awareness of indigenous issues in global processes relating to the 2030 Agenda and the Commission on the Status of Women and in operationalizing and implementing the system-wide action plan. In this regard, the recommendations of the Permanent Forum contributed as inputs to those global processes.

54. The present report has primarily focused on progress made in the five thematic areas, which were identified as good practices in terms of follow-up to recommendations.

55. The successful implementation of recommendations depends on several factors. Active follow-up by members of the Permanent Forum, with the support of the secretariat of the Forum, in cooperation with the stakeholders addressed in the recommendation, is a crucial first step. The members of the Forum have in this regard highlighted the importance of the clear distribution of responsibilities in order to identify follow-up actions on specific recommendations.

56. Recommendations that are concrete, actionable and adhere to the "SMART criteria" (see para. 14 (a), above), have been easier to follow up on. Generic recommendations without clear targets or deadlines have been less successful.

57. Furthermore, the practice of involving in the drafting process the specific funds, programmes and specialized agencies or other stakeholders addressed in the recommendations has yielded significant results in facilitating dialogue and follow-up to the implementation of recommendations after their adoption.

58. Recommendations can have a multi-year strategy and in the context of which gradual progress is made in their achievement, as in the case of promoting "empowerment of indigenous women" in the framework of the Commission on the Status of Women.

59. At its sixteenth session, the Permanent Forum may consider continuing the practice of issuing specific and more actionable recommendations in order to have a greater impact and improved results in the achievement of its mandate, including the promotion of the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.